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(54) **HANDHELD ELECTRONIC BOOK READER
DEVICE HAVING ASYMMETRICAL SHAPE**

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CPC **G09B 5/062** (2013.01); **B42D 3/123**
(2013.01); **G09B 5/06** (2013.01); **H04B 1/3822**
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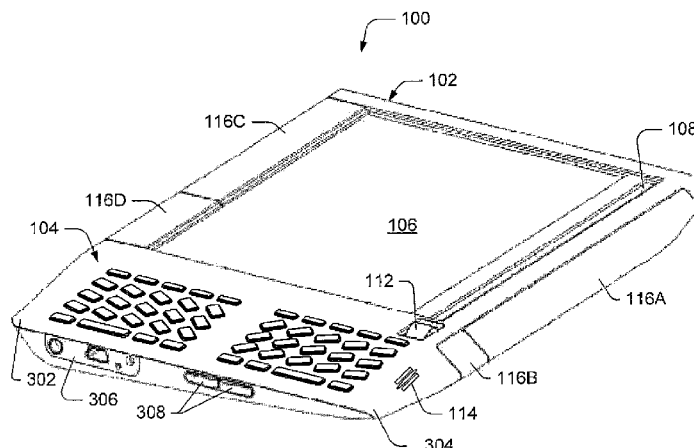
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ABSTRACT

A handheld electronic book device having asymmetrical shape is described herein. The device includes a display screen and an asymmetrical housing containing the display screen. The non-symmetrical housing has a wedge-shaped configuration, in which one side is comparatively thicker than an opposing side.

20 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets



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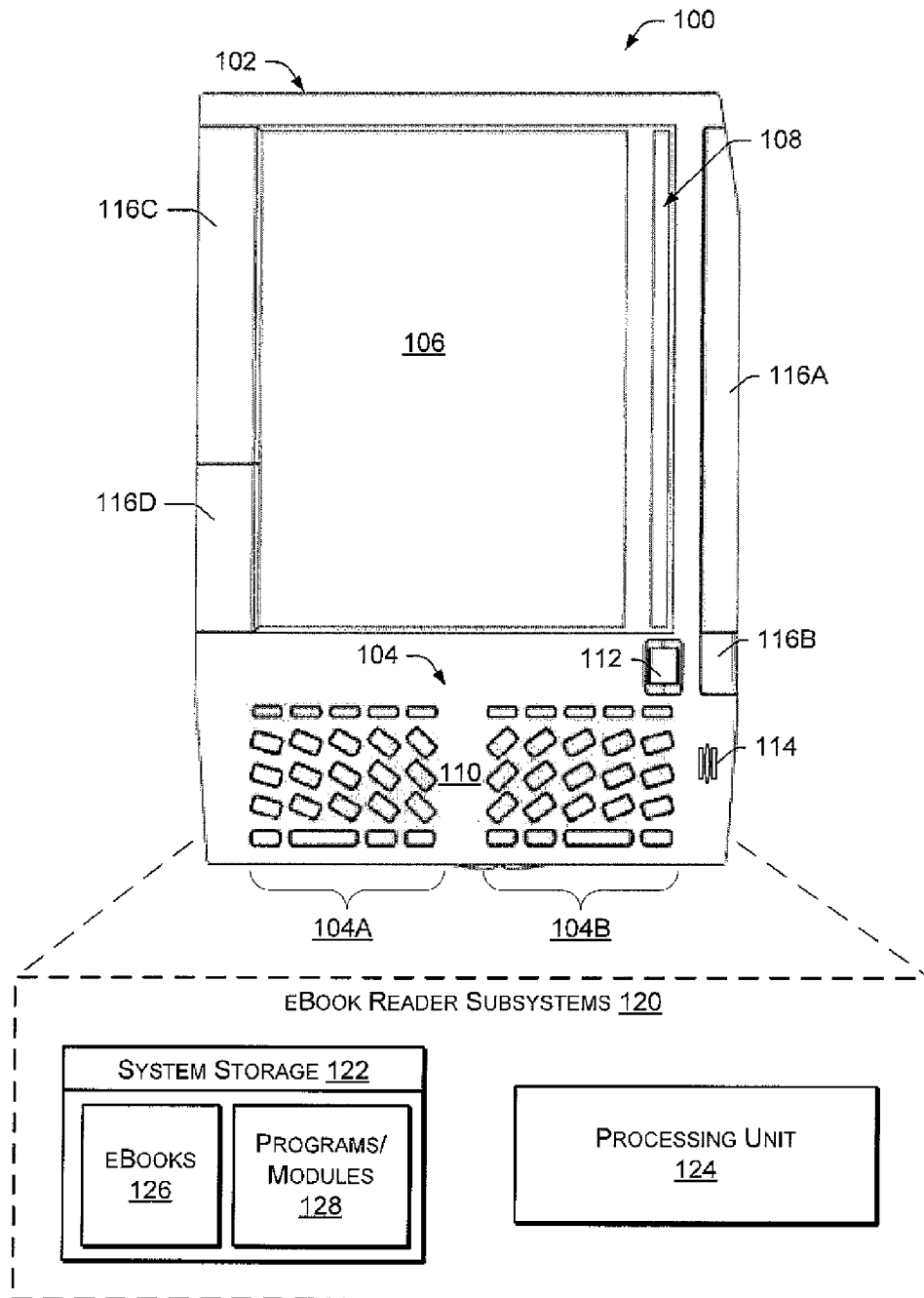


Fig. 1

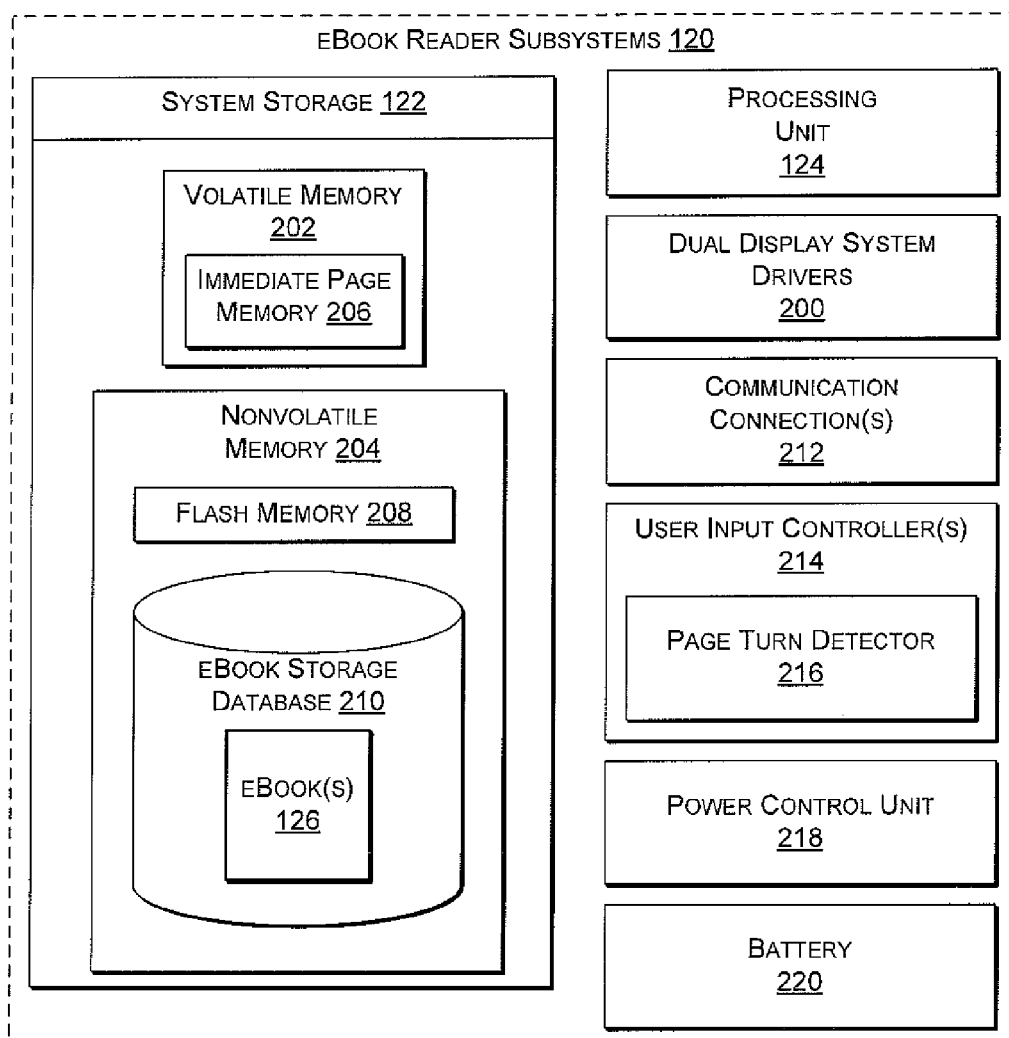


Fig. 2

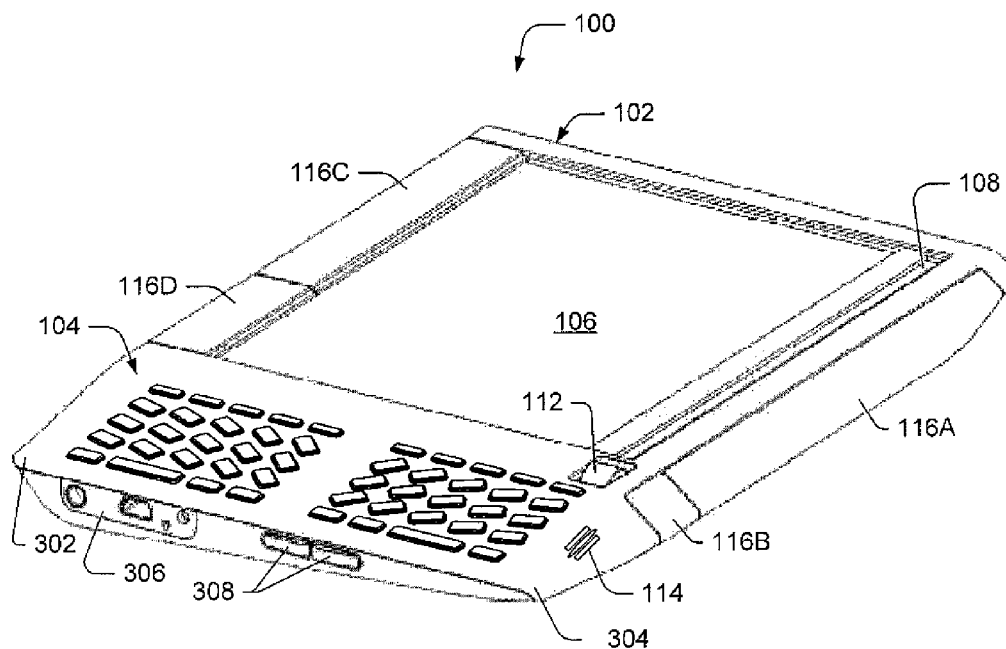


Fig. 3

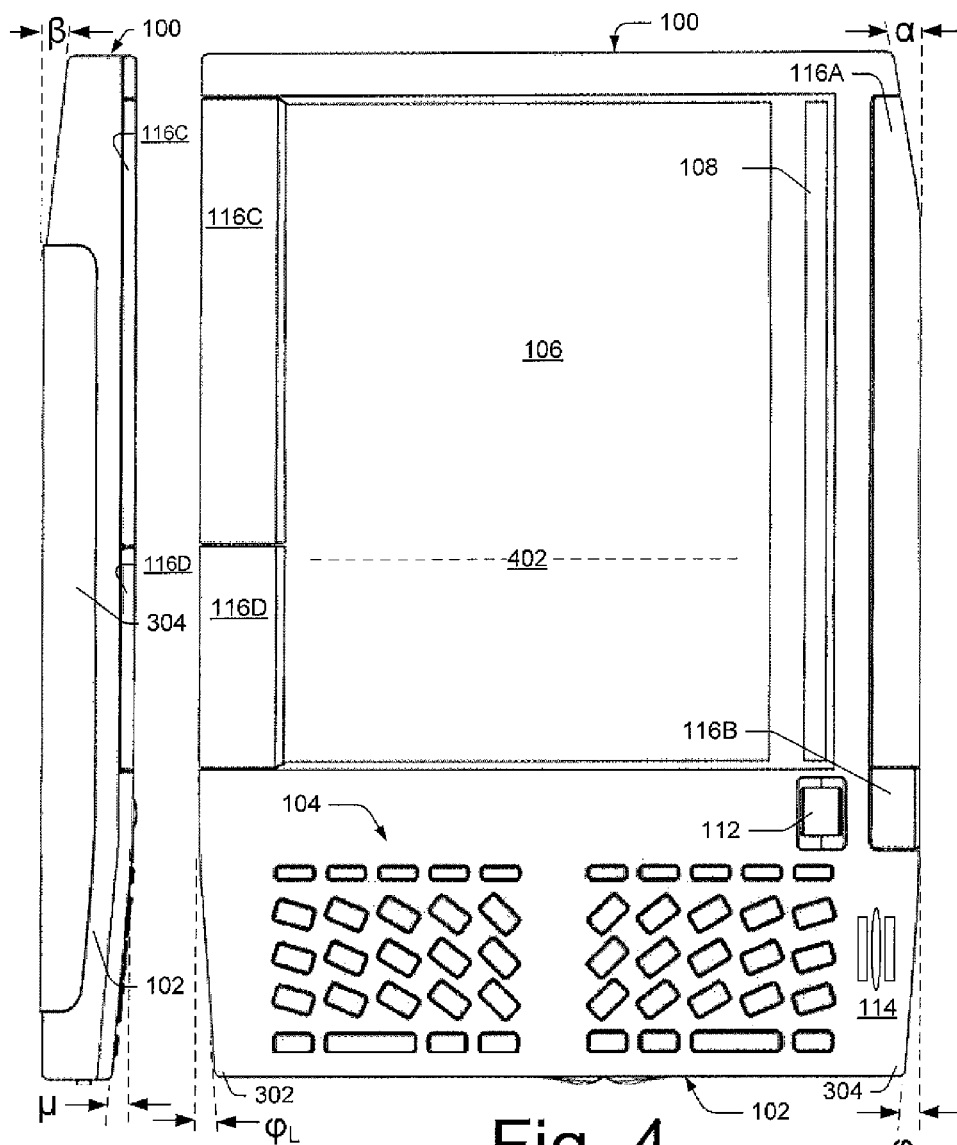


Fig. 5

Fig. 4

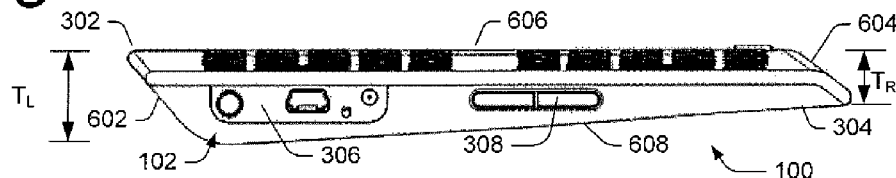


Fig. 6

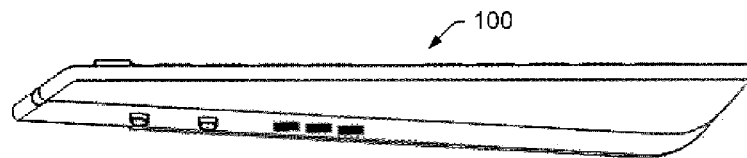


Fig. 9

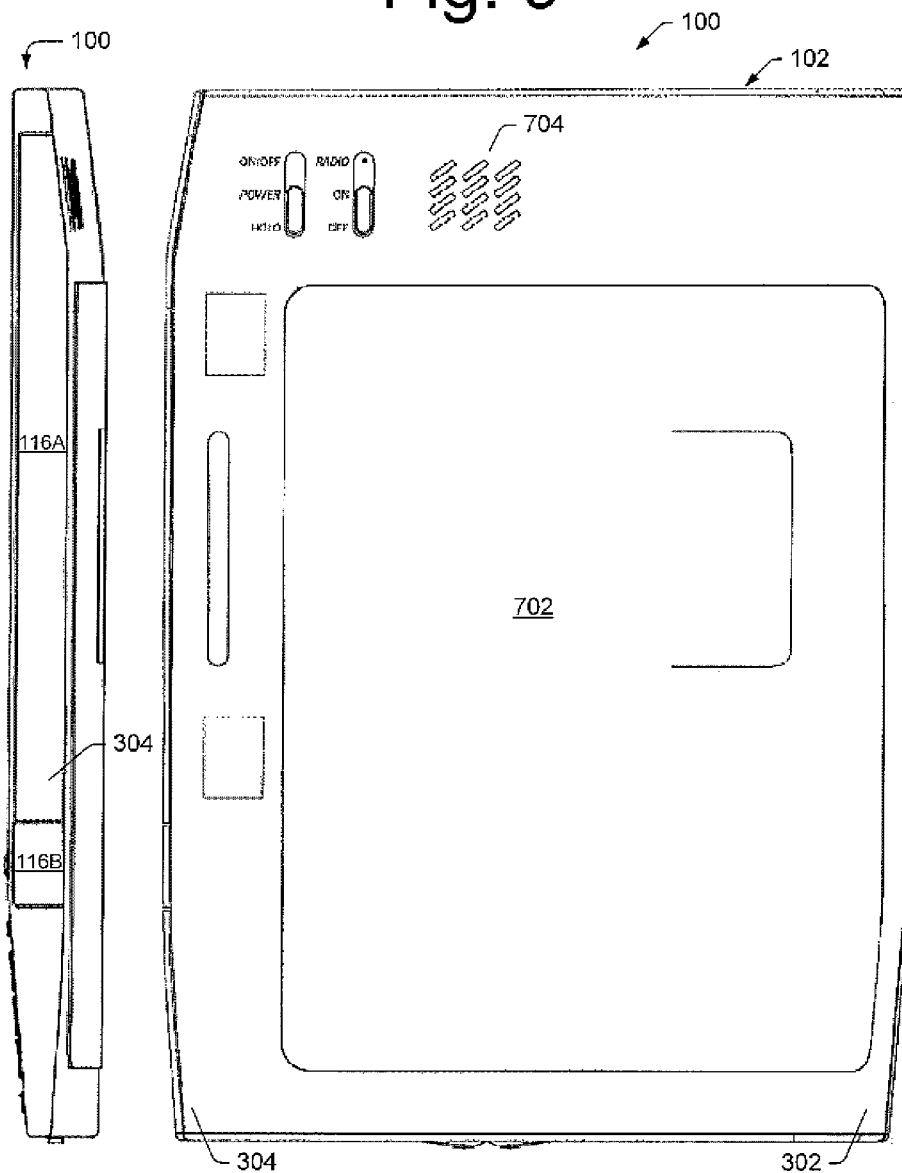


Fig. 8

Fig. 7

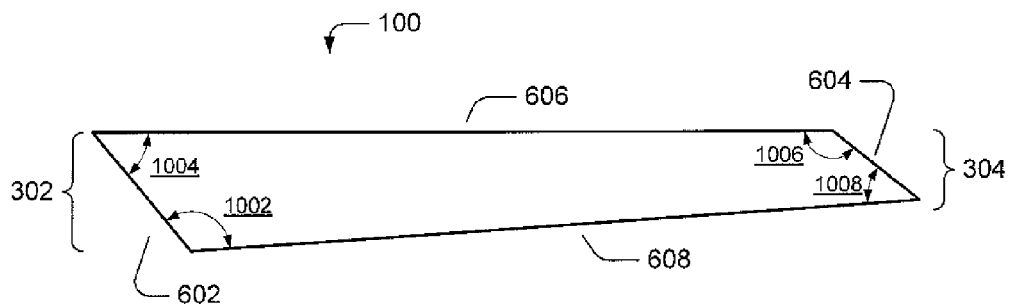


Fig. 10

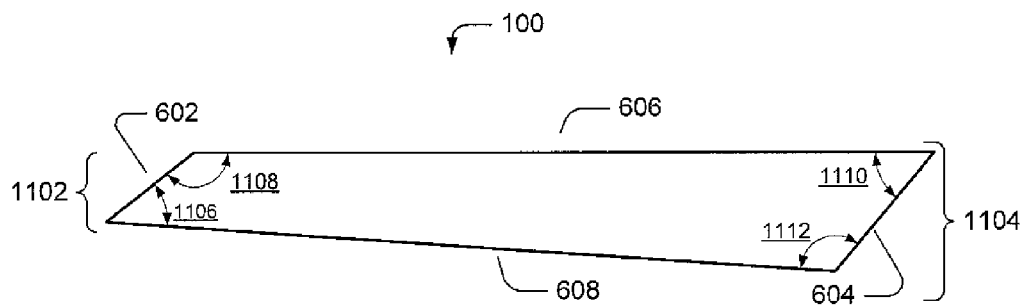


Fig. 11

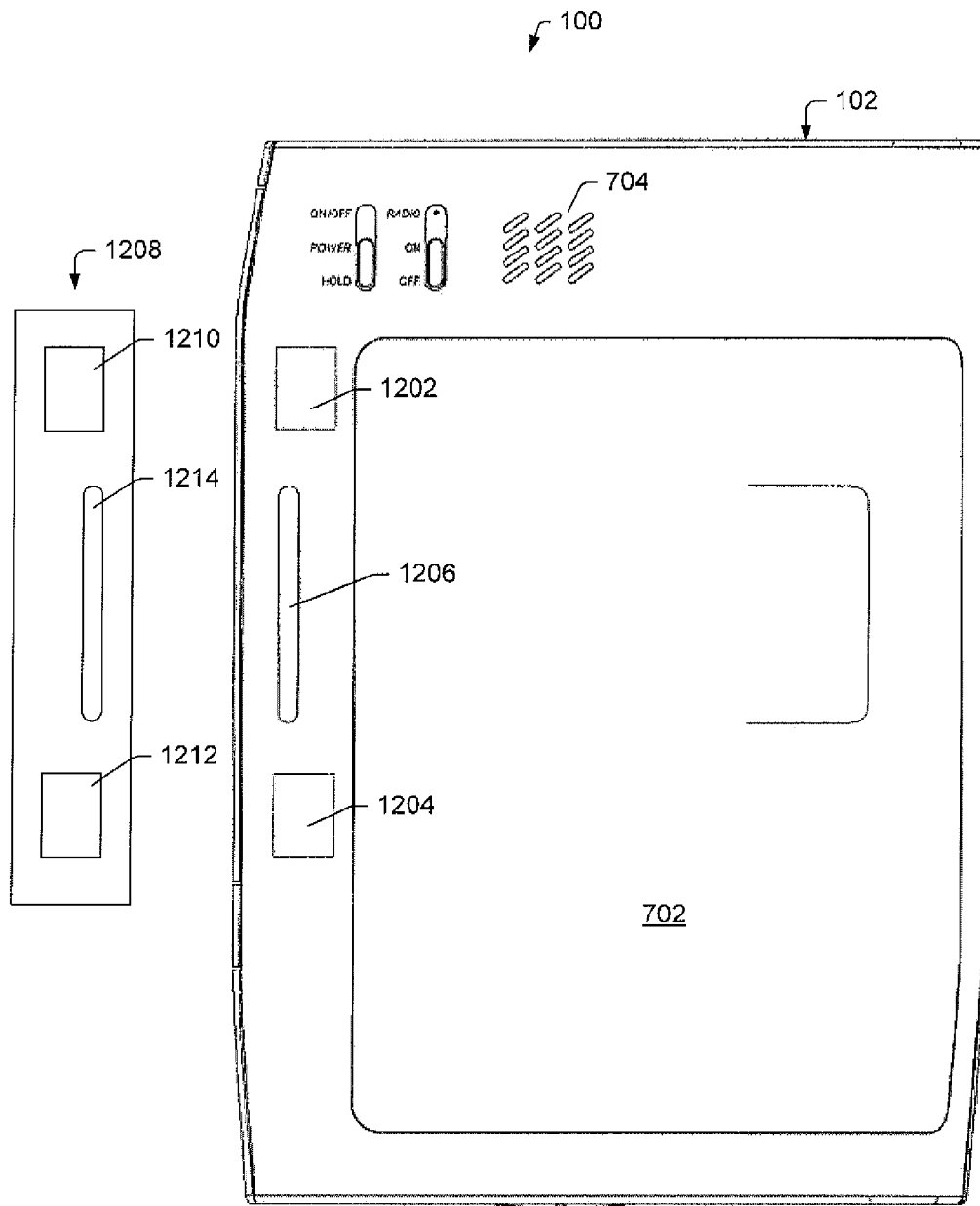


Fig. 12

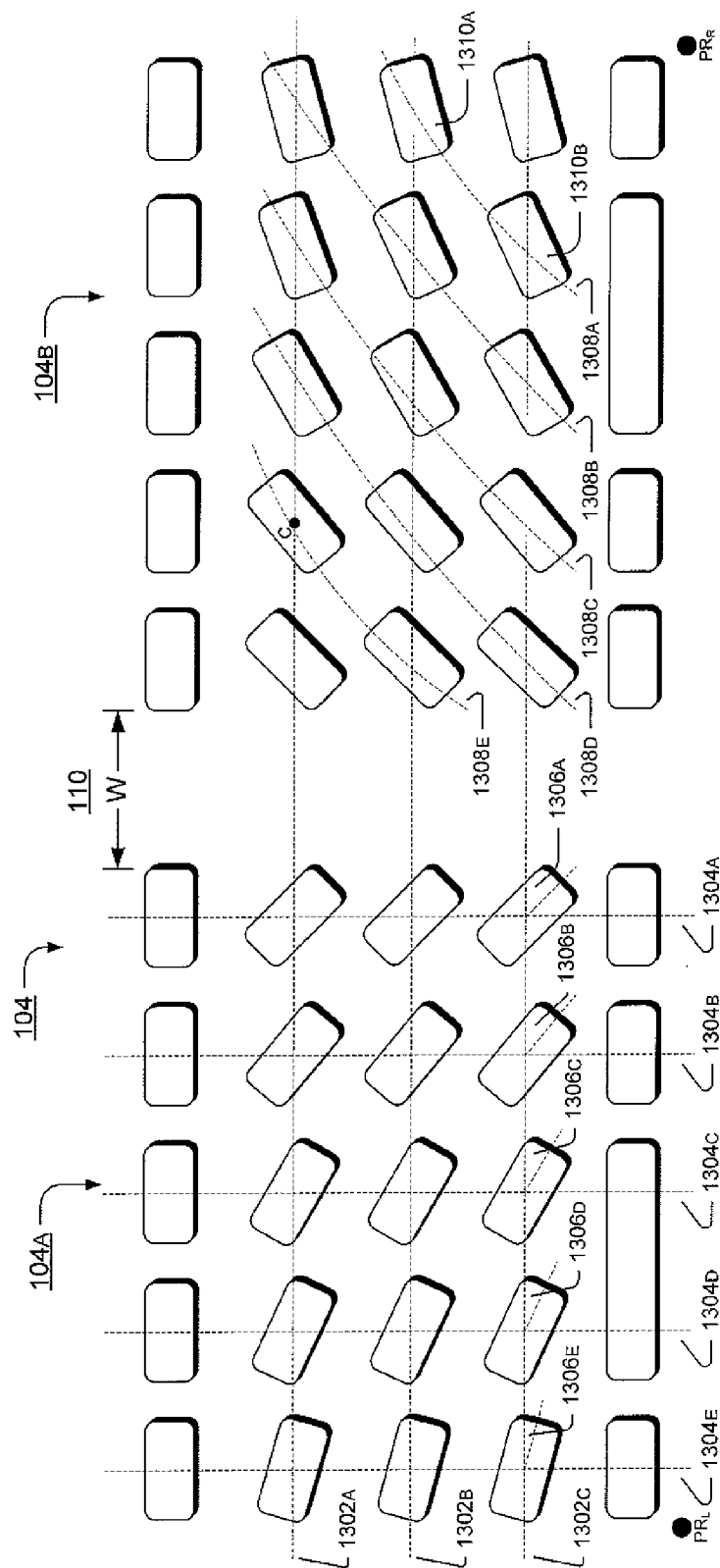


Fig. 13

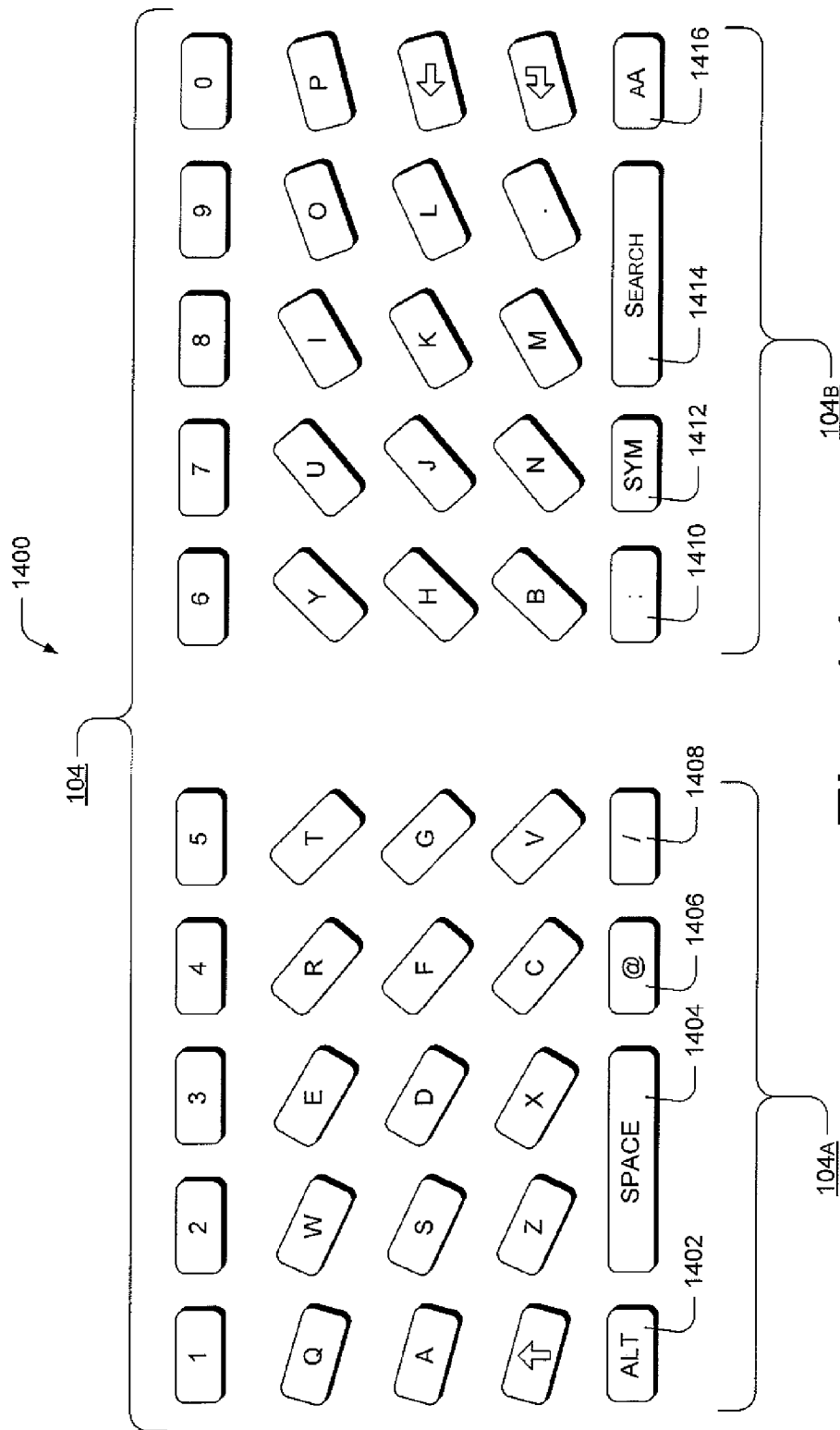


Fig. 14

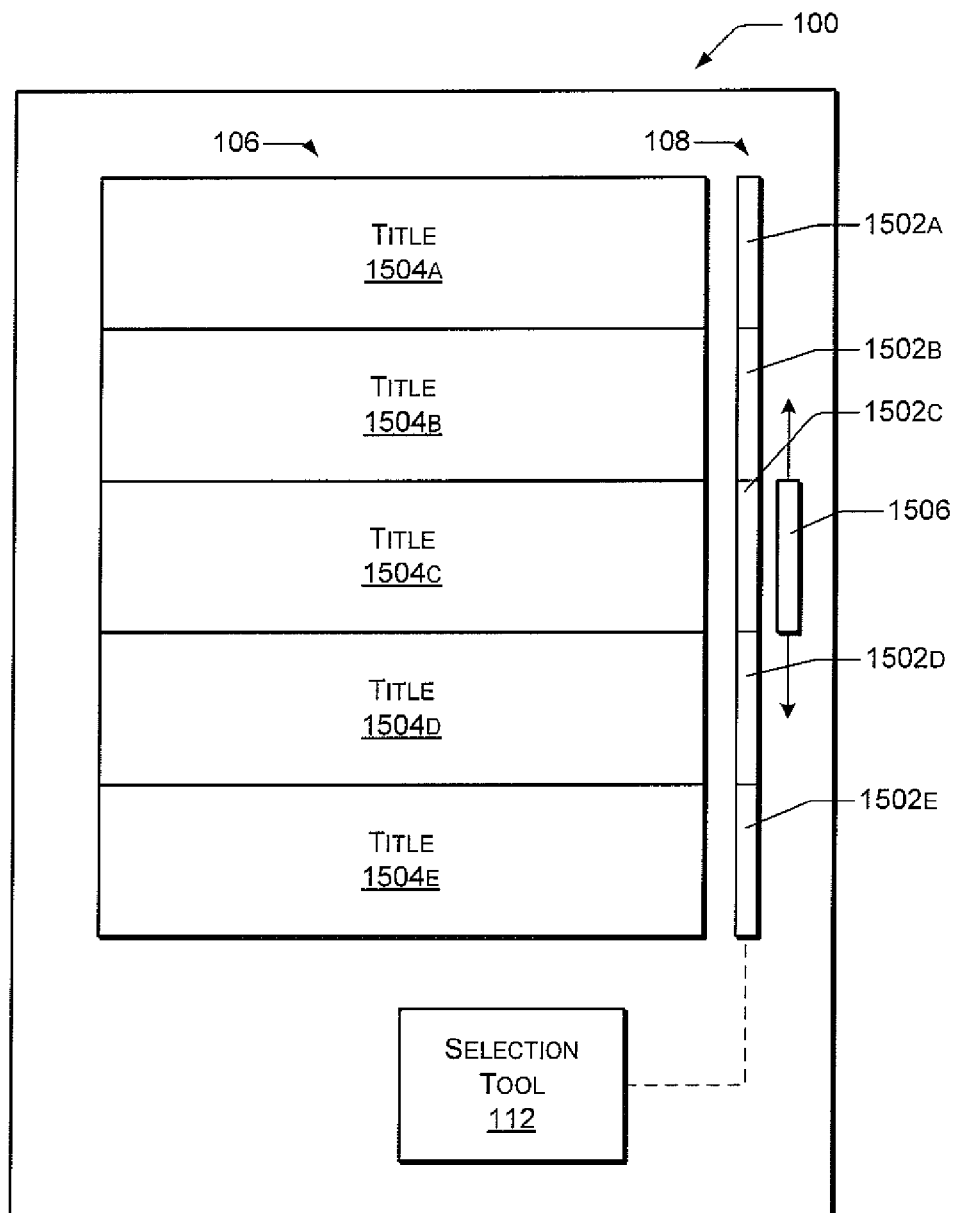
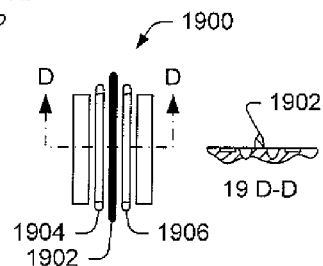
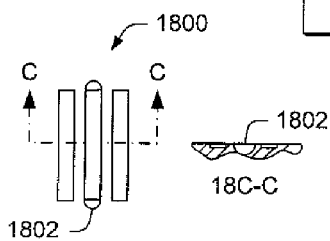
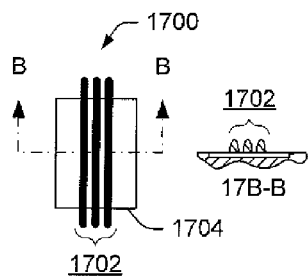
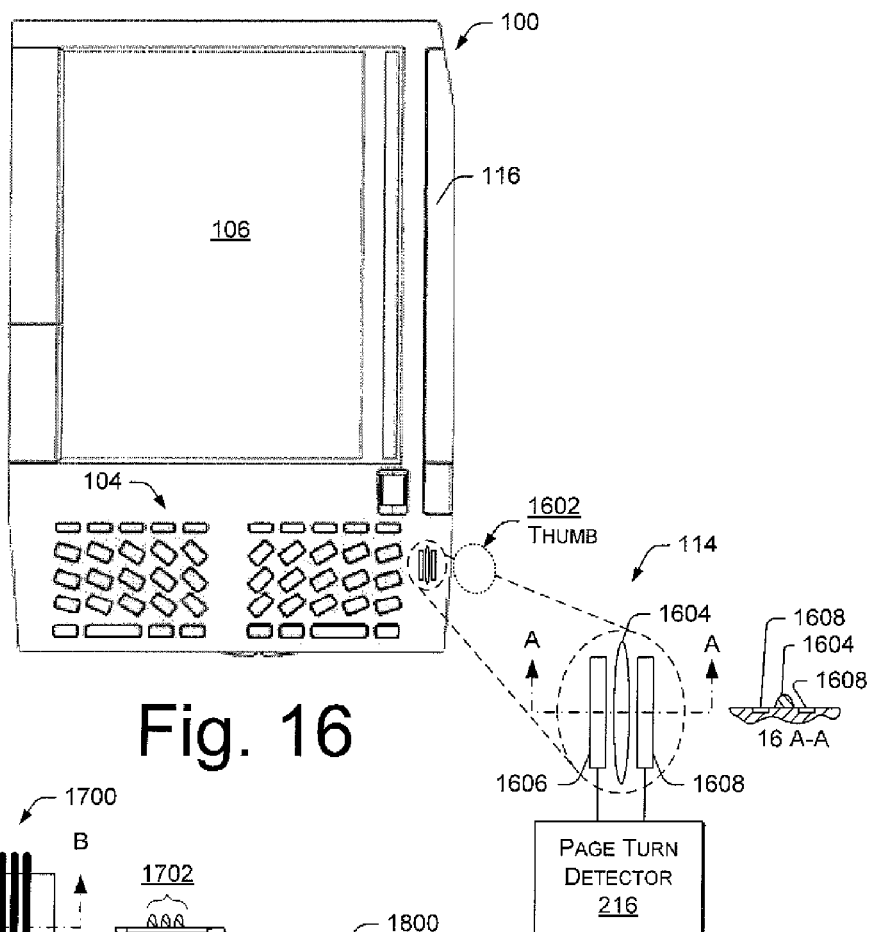


Fig. 15



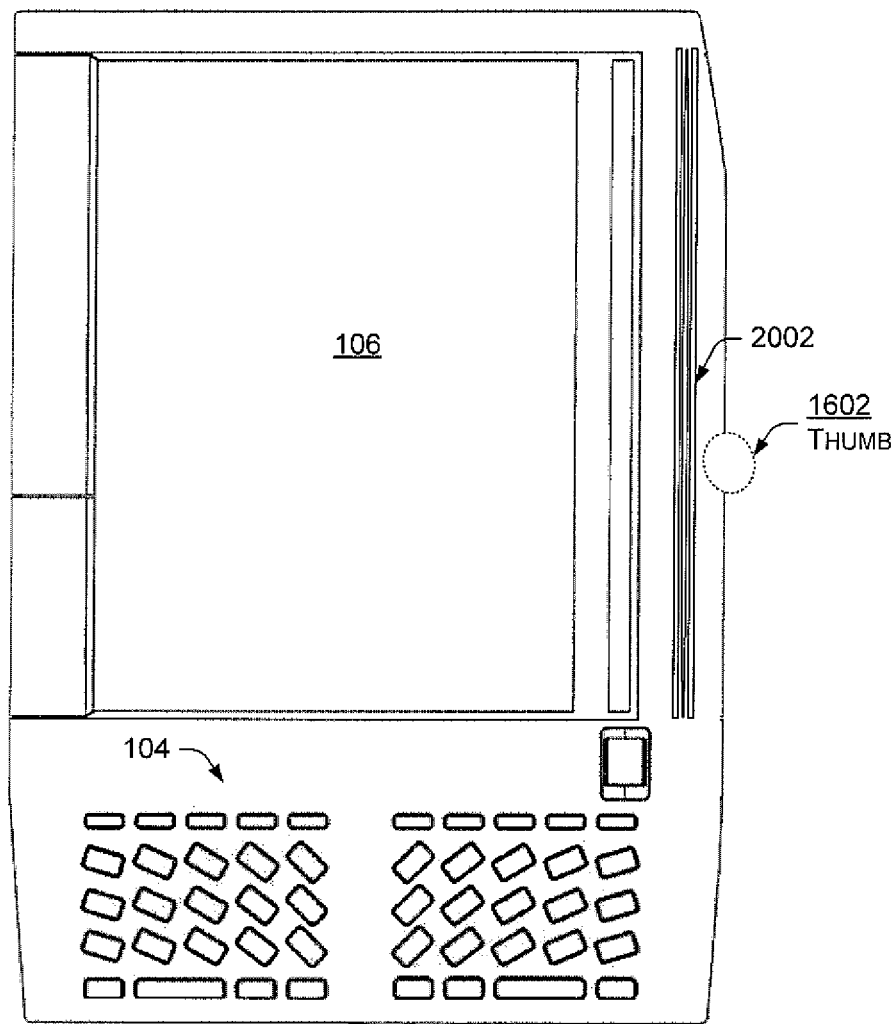


Fig. 20

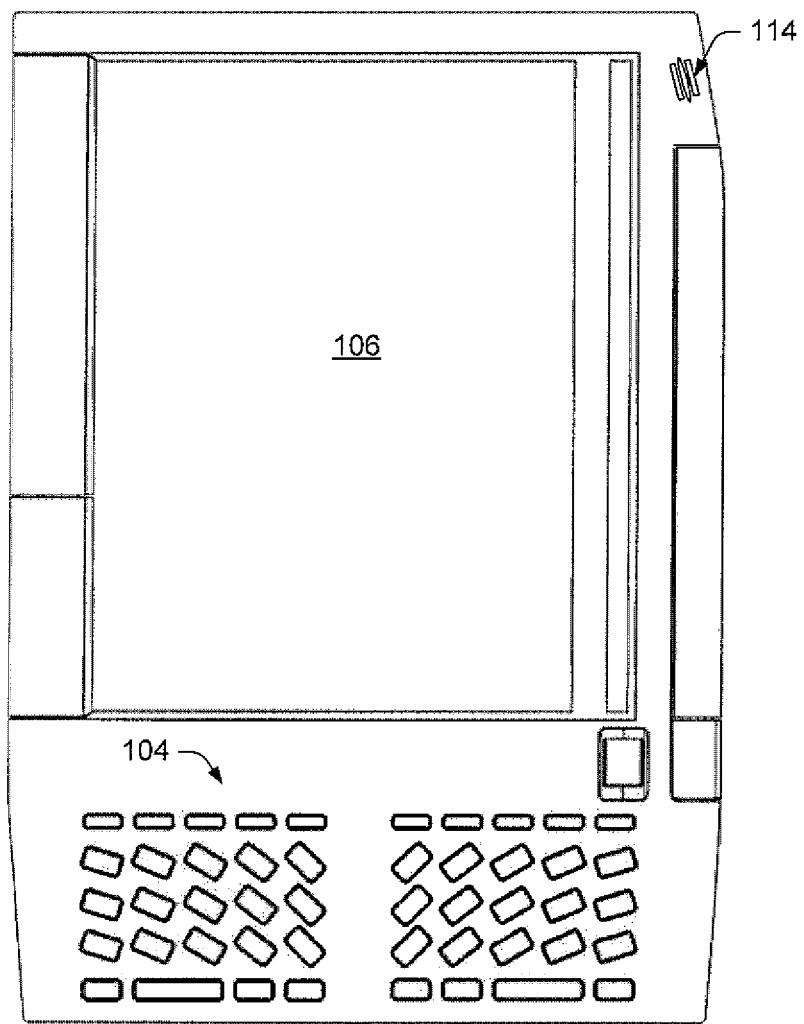


Fig. 21

**HANDHELD ELECTRONIC BOOK READER
DEVICE HAVING ASYMMETRICAL SHAPE****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

This patent application is related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/277,879, titled "Keyboard Layout for Handheld Electronic Book Reader Device," U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/277,898, titled "Page Turner for Handheld Electronic Book Reader Device," and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/277,893, titled "Handheld Electronic Book Reader Device Having Dual Displays." This patent application is further related to U.S. Design application Ser. No. 29/246,293, titled "Electronic Media Reader Display," U.S. Design application Ser. No. 29/246,294, titled "Electronic Media Reader Keypad," and U.S. Design application Ser. No. 29/246,295, titled "Wedge-Shaped Electronic Media Reader." This patent application, along with the three noted utility applications and three noted design applications, were filed concurrently on the same day of Mar. 29, 2006.

BACKGROUND

Electronic distribution of information has gained in importance with the proliferation of personal computers and has undergone a tremendous upsurge in popularity as the Internet has become widely available. With the widespread use of the Internet, it has become possible to distribute large, coherent units of information, such as books, using electronic technologies. Books distributed using electronic technologies are commonly referred to as electronic books ("eBooks"). Various entities make eBooks available for download over ordinary Internet connections, such as broadband and dialup connections.

EBook reader devices attempt to mimic the experience of reading a conventional paper book through display of electronic information on one or more electronic displays. A typical eBook reader device is a handheld digital device having a liquid crystal display panel and enough memory and processing capability to store several eBooks. Such a device is capable of retrieving and displaying an eBook or portion of an eBook for reading.

There are some advantages to using an eBook reader device over conventional paper books. An eBook reader device is often capable of storing a number of complete unabridged eBooks. Therefore, an eBook reader containing a number of stored eBooks weighs significantly less than the same number of paper books. This makes an eBook reader a particularly attractive alternative to paper books for travel, educational purposes, and professional business use. Also, because eBooks do not require the use of paper products, they are generally offered at a lower price than their paper book counterparts. Furthermore, the use of eBook reader devices in conjunction with eBooks may be beneficial to the ecosystem, by reducing a number of books produced using paper products.

To date, however, eBook readers and the use of eBooks in general have not achieved widespread consumer acceptance. This is most likely attributable to the design and implementation particulars of conventional eBook reader devices.

Awkwardness in physically handling the eBook readers may be one reason such devices have not yet gained widespread popularity. Another reason might be inconsistent or non-intuitive user interface actions that arise when a user is interacting with the eBook readers.

As such eBook readers continue to evolve, there remains a need for improving a reader's ability to hold and interact with the readers.

SUMMARY

A handheld electronic book device having asymmetrical shape is described herein. The device includes a display screen and an asymmetrical housing containing the display screen. The non-symmetrical housing has a wedge-shaped configuration, in which one side is comparatively thicker than an opposing side.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The detailed description is described with reference to the accompanying figures. In the figures, the left-most digit(s) of a reference number identifies the figure in which the reference number first appears. The use of the same reference numbers in different figures indicates similar or identical components or features.

FIG. 1 illustrates one exemplary implementation of a handheld electronic book ("eBook") reader device.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing exemplary components that may be implemented in the eBook reader device of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the eBook reader device to demonstrate its non-symmetrical shape.

FIG. 4 is a front plan view of the eBook reader device.

FIG. 5 is a side elevation view of a first side of the eBook reader device, as shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a bottom elevation view of the eBook reader device, as shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a back plan view of the eBook reader device.

FIG. 8 is a side elevation view of a second side of the eBook reader device, which is opposite the first side shown in FIG. 5.

FIG. 9 is a top elevation view of the eBook reader device.

FIG. 10 is an outline diagram representing a wedge-shaped configuration of the eBook reader device, viewed as a cross-section of the eBook reader device.

FIG. 11 is an outline diagram representing an alternative wedge-shaped configuration of the eBook reader device, viewed as a cross-section of the eBook reader device.

FIG. 12 is a block diagram providing a rear view of another possible implementation of the device, along with an accessory for the device.

FIG. 13 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary arrangement of keys in a keyboard of the eBook reader device.

FIG. 14 is a block diagram of another illustrative configuration for the keyboard, with example labels affixed to various keys.

FIG. 15 illustrates a dual display system employed by the eBook reader device, where the dual display system includes a content display and a narrow display.

FIG. 16 illustrates a page turning mechanism of the eBook reader device in more detail.

FIGS. 17-19 show different example embodiments of the page turning mechanism.

FIG. 20 illustrates an elongated page turning mechanism.

FIG. 21 shows another implementation in which the page turning mechanism is positioned near an upper right hand corner of the device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

This disclosure is directed to a handheld electronic book reader device designed to allow users to read electronic con-

tent (e.g., text, graphics, multimedia, and the like), such as that found in electronic books, magazines, RSS feeds, newspapers, and the like. The electronic book reader device has a non-symmetric shape designed to approximate the feel of an open paperback book. To improve user interaction, two displays are mounted in the eBook reader device, one to present the text or graphic content and a second display to support user interface functions such as navigation, command entry, browsing, lookup functions, or the like. The eBook reader device is further equipped with a QWERTY keyboard with a unique key arrangement that facilitates improved user entry when the user is holding the device. A page turner is also provided on the eBook reader device to allow the user to turn pages with a familiar tactile motion.

These and other aspects are described below in various example implementations of an electronic device that presents electronic books, news print, electronic magazines, RSS feeds, or other forms of media content. More specifically, the description herein provides a non-limiting implementation of an electronic device in the form of an electronic book reader device.

The terms “book” and/or “eBook” as used herein include electronic or digital representations of printed works, as well as digital content that may include text, multimedia, hypertext and/or hypermedia. Examples of printed and/or digital works include, but are not limited to, books, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, journals, reference materials, telephone books, textbooks, anthologies, instruction manuals, proceedings of meetings, forms, directories, maps etc. Accordingly, the terms book and/or eBook may include any content that is in electronic or digital format.

With such eBooks, the content may be structured as virtual frames presented on the device and a user may turn or change from one virtual frame or “page” of electronic content to another. It is further noted that various aspects and features described herein may be implemented in other electronic devices or electronic readers besides eBook reader devices including, for example, portable computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), portable gaming devices, wireless phones, and the like.

Exemplary eBook Reader Device

FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary device **100** with a non-symmetric shape. In one possible implementation, the device **100** is embodied as a handheld eBook reader device. The non-symmetrical shape enables the eBook reader device **100** to approximate the feel of a paperback book that is bound along its left side. As a human reader progresses through a physical paperback book, he or she may fold the read pages back around the bound spine and tuck them underneath the book. Overtime, the paperback book takes on a somewhat wedge-shaped configuration as more pages are folded back in this manner. Typically, the reader would grip the thicker part of the “wedge” in his or her left hand, and flip pages with his or her right hand. This shape will be more readily apparent with reference to FIGS. 3-11, which are described below in more detail.

The eBook reader device **100** has a body or housing **102**, a keyboard **104**, and a dual display system comprised of a first display **106** and a second display **108**. The housing may be formed of plastic, aluminum, or other suitable material. The housing **102** may be textured or otherwise provided with tactile features to enhance gripping by a human user. Additionally, the housing may be of one-piece construction, or may be assembled from a plurality of sub-components or sub-portions.

The device keyboard **104** includes a plurality of keys. In the illustrated implementation, the keyboard includes at least 26

alphabet keys arranged in a QWERTY format as well as other function keys (such as space bar, control keys, function keys, and so forth). It is noted that the keyboard may include other arrangements of the 26 alphabet keys that do not conform to the QWERTY layout. The keys are separated into two groups including a first or left-side group of keys **104A** and a second or right-side group of keys **104B**. The key groups **104A** and **104B** are separated by a space or open region **110**. Individual keys are sized to accommodate a user's thumb or finger. While the keys are arranged in horizontal rows, individual keys are rotated within the rows such that keys in adjacent rows lie along arcuate paths. The key orientation facilitates ergonomic operation by a user's thumbs when the user is grasping the two lower corners of the device **100**. The keyboard **104** and key orientation are described below in more detail with reference to FIGS. 13 and 14.

The first display **106** in the dual display system presents content in a human-readable format to the user. The content presented in the first display **106** may take the form of electronic books, newspapers, or other readable or viewable materials. For example, the display **106** provides the text of the electronic books and also depicts any illustrations, tables, or graphic elements that might be contained in the electronic books. In one implementation, the content display **106** employs display technology with a relatively slow refresh rate in exchange for a relatively low rate of power consumption. This tradeoff serves to maximize battery life. Further, since the display **106** may be used to depict electronic books, the content is relatively static and hence a slow-refresh rate technology may be suitable for implementing the display **106**. In some implementations, the display **106** is not responsive to user input.

As one example, the display **106** may be implemented using electronic paper display technology. In general, an electronic paper display is one that has a high resolution (150 dpi or better) and is bi-stable, meaning that it is capable of holding text or other rendered images even when very little or no power is supplied to the display. The electronic paper display technology may also exhibit high contrast substantially equal to that of print on paper. Some exemplary electronic paper displays that may be used with the implementations described herein include bi-stable LCDs, MEMS, cholesteric, pigmented electrophoretic, and others. One exemplary electronic paper display that may be used is an E Ink-brand display.

The second display **108** of the dual display system is a narrow screen located adjacent to the content display **106**. The narrow display **108** is illustrated as being positioned to the right of the content display **106**, although it may be located elsewhere in the housing **102** in other implementations. The narrow display screen **108** may be responsive to user input registered via, for example, a finger, a stylus, or other similar pointing device. Additionally, the narrow display screen **108** may enable presentation of graphic elements that correspond to content displayed in the content display **106**. These graphic elements may be selected by the user in order to select the corresponding content in the display **106**, as described further below. Some exemplary displays that may be used with the implementations of the narrow display include organic LEDs, TFT, and PN LCD.

The narrow display screen **108** provides many diverse functions. For instance, it may present a form of user interface that enables the user to command the device to turn pages of text, scroll up or down pages of text, zoom in or zoom out, navigate to other locations in the book, or the like. In possible implementations, the narrow display **108** may be broken into segments or zones, with different ones of the segments or

zones corresponding to user input in different ways. For example, the user might tap one part of the narrow display **108** to scroll in one direction, and may tap another part of the narrow display **108** to scroll in another direction. The dual display system is described below in more detail with reference to FIG. 15.

The eBook reader device **100** may also include a user input tool **112**, which can be configured to support many diverse operations. For instance, the tool **112** may enable the user to flip through pages, skip chapters, operate the narrow display **108**, or scroll through content on the display **106**. The tool **112** may be implemented in many forms, including as a scroll wheel, a thumb wheel, a thumb stick, a sensor that detects and registers movement of a user's thumb or finger, or any other user input mechanism. In some implementations, the user input tool **112** may be operative in connection with graphic elements displayed on the narrow display **108** to enable the user to place content displayed in the content display **106** in focus. The tool **112** may also be clickable so as to select the content that is currently in focus for additional processing. Thus, the tool **112** may also be considered a selection tool.

The eBook reader device **100** may be further equipped with a page turner to facilitate the turning of pages of an electronic book. The page turner is configured to simulate a tactile ruffle feel as the user flips pages in a book. In the illustrated implementation, the page turner is configured as a page turning mechanism **114** having a tactile member (e.g., a ridge or indentation) juxtaposed with one or more sensors, and sized to accommodate a user's thumb or finger. The tactile member provides the tactile feedback to the user to simulate the ruffle sensation. The sensors detect speed and direction of the user's thumb or finger, thereby enabling the device to detect gestures of flipping forward or backward through one or more pages of the book. While illustrated to the right of the keyboard **104**, the page turning mechanism **114** may be located in any number of locations on the device **100**. The page turning mechanism **114** is described below in more detail with reference to FIGS. 16-21.

Additionally, the page turning mechanism **114** may enable a user to enter commands in a manner similar to that described with the user input tool **112**. More particularly, the user may interact with either the user input tool **112** or the page turning mechanism **114** to, for example, navigate content, enter commands, browse menu items, or the like.

The term "page" as used herein refers to a collection of content that is presented at one time in the first display **106**. Thus, a "page" as described herein may be understood as a virtual frame of the content, or a visual display window presenting the content to the user. Thus, "pages" as described herein are not fixed permanently, in contrast to the pages of published "hard" books. Instead, pages described herein may be redefined or repaginated when, for example, the user chooses a different font for displaying the content in the first display **106**.

The eBook reader device **100** may also include a plurality of programmable control surfaces **116**. For convenience only, FIG. 1 shows four examples of such control surfaces **116**, referenced at **116A**, **116B**, **116C**, and **116D**. The control surfaces **116** may be programmed to perform any convenient functions related to operating the device **100**. The control surfaces **116A** and **116B** may be operable with a user's right hand, for example, while the control surfaces **116C** and **116D** may be operable with the user's left hand.

For example only, the control surface **116A** may be programmed to present a next page (or other logical unit) of content in the content display **106** when activated. The control surface **116B** may be programmed to present a menu of

options in the content display **106** when activated. The control surface **116C** may be configured similarly the surface **116A**, so as to advance the page of content shown in the content display **106**. However, the control surface **116C** may be operable with the left hand. Finally, the control surface **116D** may be programmed to present a previous page of content in the content display **106**.

It is understood that the foregoing descriptions of functions assigned to the control surfaces **116** are illustrative and non-limiting. Other functions may be assigned to one or more of the various control surfaces **116** without departing from the scope of the description herein.

The keys, tools, and turning mechanisms are merely examples of user interface elements. The eBook reader device **100** may further include other types of actuable elements that may have dedicated or assigned operations. For instance, the device **100** may have a power on/off button, and selection keys.

As also illustrated in FIG. 1, the eBook reader device **100** has various internal components, which are defined generally by the eBook reader subsystems **120**. In one implementation, the subsystems **120** include system storage **122** and a processing unit **124**. The processing unit **124** interacts with the system storage **122** to facilitate operation of the eBook reader device **100**. The system storage **122** may be used to store eBooks and other content **126**, as well as software programs or other executable modules **128** that may be executed by the processing unit. Examples of such programs or modules might include reader programs, control modules (e.g., power management), network connection software, operating models, display drivers, sensor algorithms, page turn detectors, and the like.

FIG. 2 illustrates exemplary components that might be implemented in the eBook reader subsystems **120**. In a very basic configuration, the subsystems **120** include the system storage **122**, the processing unit **124**, and dual display system drivers **200** for controlling eBook content output to the content display **106** as well as data or commands output to the narrow display **108**. Depending on the configuration of an eBook reader device **100**, the system storage **122** includes a volatile memory **202** (such as RAM) and a nonvolatile memory **204**. The volatile memory **202** includes a memory portion designated as an immediate page memory **206** to temporarily store one or more pages of an electronic book. The pages held by the immediate page memory **206** are placed therein a short period before a next page request is expected.

The nonvolatile memory **204** includes a flash memory **208** that typically contains an operating system of the eBook reader device **100**. The nonvolatile memory **204** also includes an eBook storage database **210** to store one or more eBooks **126** (depending on the size of the eBooks and the size of the memory) that are displayable on the display **104**.

The eBook reader subsystems **120** may also include one or more communication connections **212** that allow the eBook reader device **100** to communicate with other computer systems or other devices. Electronic books and other content, as well as program modules, may be transferred to the eBook reader device **100** via the communication connection(s) **212**. The communication connection(s) **212** support both wired and wireless communications with various types of networks, including the Internet. For example, the eBook reader device **100** may be equipped with an RF transceiver to facilitate wireless communication over a wireless network. The device may further include a communication connection that facilitates communication with other devices via, for example, a Bluetooth or IR connection. The communication connection(s) **212** are one example of communication media.

Communication media may typically be embodied by computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules, or other data in a modulated data signal, such as a carrier wave or other transport mechanism, and includes any information delivery media.

One or more user input controllers **214** are also provided to capture user input via the keyboard **104**, tool **112**, page turning mechanism **114**, and any other user input element on the device **100**. The user input controller(s) **214** include a page turn detector **216** that detects the user's finger speed and direction when swiped across the page turning mechanism **114**. The detector provides this information to the processing unit **124**, which then identifies the correct page to be retrieved from the memory (either immediate page member **206** or in the storage database **210**) and displays it on the content display **106**. The page turn detector **216**, and its operation in conjunction with the page turning mechanism **114**, is described in more detail below with reference to FIG. **14**. The eBook reader device **100** may also have other input device(s) such as a mouse, pen, voice input device, touch input device, and so forth.

The eBook reader subsystems **120** also include a power control unit **218** and a battery **220**. The power control unit **218** operatively controls an amount of power, or electrical energy, consumed by the eBook reader device **100**. Actively controlling the amount of power consumed by the reader device **100** may achieve more efficient use of electrical energy stored by the battery **220**. The processing unit **124** supplies computing resources to the power control unit **218**. The power control unit **218** may further include a clock/timer for accurate control of power consumed by the reader device **100**.

The eBook reader device **100** may have additional features or functionality. For example, the eBook reader device **100** may also include additional data storage devices (removable and/or non-removable) such as, for example, magnetic disks, optical disks, or tape. The additional data storage media may include volatile and nonvolatile, removable and non-removable media implemented in any method or technology for storage of information, such as computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules, or other data. Output device(s) such as an auxiliary display, speakers, printer, etc. may also be included.

The system storage **122** is an exemplary example of computer storage media. Thus, computer storage media include, but are not limited to, RAM, ROM, EEPROM, flash memory or other memory technology, CD-ROM, digital versatile disks (DVD) or other optical storage, magnetic cassettes, magnetic tape, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium which can be used to store the desired information and which can be accessed by the eBook reader device **100**. Any such computer storage media may be part of the eBook reader device **100**.

Various instructions, methods and techniques described herein may be considered in the general context of computer-executable instructions, such as program modules, executed by one or more computers or other devices. Generally, program modules include routines, programs, objects, components, data structures, etc. for performing particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. These program modules and the like may be executed as native code or may be downloaded and executed, such as in a virtual machine or other just-in-time compilation execution environment. Typically, the functionality of the program modules may be combined or distributed as desired in various embodiments. An

implementation of these modules and techniques may be stored on or transmitted across some form of computer readable media.

Non-Symmetrical Shape

FIG. **3** shows a perspective view of one exemplary implementation of the handheld eBook reader device **100**. The housing **102** is designed with a non-symmetrical wedge-shaped configuration in which a left hand side **302** is thicker than the right hand side **304** of the device **100**. When the user grasps the thicker left side **302** with his or her left hand, the housing **102** simulates the feel of a bound paperback book, particularly when pages that have been read are curled back around the left-side bound spine and tucked underneath the book. This leaves the right hand of the user free to interact with the device, such as the keyboard **104**, narrow display **108**, tool **112**, and page turning mechanism **114**. With the wedge-spaced configuration, the device weight may or may not be uniformly distributed across the housing, but instead the left side of the device may be heavier than the right side. The similarity of handling the device **100** as compared to a paperback book may enhance user acceptance of the eBook reader device **100**. In alternative implementations, the device **100** may be constructed intentionally to achieve uniform distribution across the housing to permit reading comfort regardless of whether the reader is holding the device with her left or right hand. This uniform weighting may be achieved in many ways, including distribution of components inside the housing **102** or additional weight elements positioned on the right side of the device.

The programmable control surfaces **116** are also shown in FIG. **3**. In the illustrative embodiment, the control surface **116A** may be approximately the same height as the first display **106**. The control surface **116B** may be approximately the same height as the selection tool **112**. Finally, the combined heights of the control surfaces **116C** and **116D** may approximately match the height of the first display **106**.

The size and the positioning of the control surfaces **116** enable convenient manipulation by users having a variety of different hand and/or finger sizes. Additionally, different users may position their hands or fingers differently on the device **100**, and the configuration of the control surfaces **116** enables use under a variety of different positions of hands and/or fingers.

It is noted that alternative configurations are possible without departing from the scope and spirit of the description herein. For example, the device may be configured so that the user's right hand receives the thicker portion of the device. Put differently, in FIG. **3**, the housing **102** may have a thicker left side rather than right side when the device is oriented for reading. One approach to implementing this alternative configuration is to construct the housing thereof as a reverse or mirror image of the housing **102** shown in FIG. **3**. This alternative configuration may be suitable for left-handed readers, for example.

The device **100** may also include ports **306**, which may connect the device to receive data or power from external sources. For example, the battery **220** may be recharged by connecting an output jack from an external power supply to one of the ports **306**. Another port **306** may support a wired connection to facilitate data transfer so that eBooks, other content, or program modules may be downloaded to the device **100** over the wired connection. Respective cables may be connected individually to the ports **306**, or the handheld electronic book device may be engaged into a docking station adapted to provide power and/or data to the ports **306**.

The eBook reader device **100** may further include one or more buttons **308** to support other operational control func-

tions. For instance, the buttons **308** may provide power on/off, menu selection capabilities, volume control, brightness/contrast functionality, or page forward/backward functionality. These are but a few examples of the various functions that may be implemented in the device.

FIGS. 4-6 show the front, left side, and bottom views of the eBook reader device **100**, respectively. The housing **102**, keyboard **104**, content display **106**, narrow display **108**, tool **112**, page turning mechanism **114**, and control surfaces **116A-116D** are all visible on the face of the device (FIG. 4). The ports **306** and control buttons **308** are seen on the bottom (FIG. 6).

When the device **100** is oriented for reading, content presented in the display **106** may be aligned parallel with an axis **402** (FIG. 4). Additionally, the keys of keyboard **104** may be aligned in rows that are parallel with the axis **402**. The thicker left side **302** and the thinner right side **304** extend along axes that are perpendicular to the axis **402**. An illustrative but non-limiting height for the device **100** may be, for example, 190 mm, but may range from approximately 150 mm to approximately 200 mm. An illustrative but non-limiting width for the device **100** may be, for example, 135 mm, but may range from approximately 120 mm to approximately 150 mm. An illustrative but non-limiting weight for the device **100** may range from approximately 250 g to 300 g.

As shown in FIG. 5, certain control surfaces **116** (namely, the control surfaces **116C** and **116D**) are in the same plane as the displays **106** and **108**. However, these control surfaces **116** lie in a different plane than the keyboard **104**, since the keyboard is angled relative to the displays **106** and **108** by the angle μ , which is described in detail below. The other control surfaces **116C** and **116D** are positioned along a surface **602** (FIG. 6) that is not coplanar with the displays **106** and **108**, as will be described below in more detail.

As shown in FIG. 6, the thicker left side **302** of the wedge-shaped housing **102** has a thickness T_L and the thinner right side **304** has a thickness T_R , where T_R is less than T_L . In one illustrative but non-limiting implementation, the left side thickness T_L may be approximately 17 mm, but may fall generally within a range of approximately 15 mm to approximately 20 mm. Also, the right side thickness T_R may be approximately 10 mm, but may fall generally within a range of approximately 5 mm to 15 mm.

As further shown in FIG. 6, the housing includes a left edge surface **602** on the left side **302** and a right edge surface **604** on the right side **304**. The left and right edge surfaces **602** and **604** are not perpendicular to a horizontal upper surface **606** or the slanted lower surface **608**. The relationships of these surfaces are described in more detail with reference to FIGS. 10 and 11. It is noted that the relationship of thicknesses, and the relationship of the surfaces, provide the wedge-shape configuration of the eBook reader device **100**. While one example is shown, other wedge-shape configurations may be used.

The angle between the upper surface **606** and the left edge surface **602** may be defined so as to enable a user to grip the left side of the reader **100** with a left hand. This angle may also enable the user to manipulate the control surfaces **116C** and **116D** and the left-hand portion of the keyboard **104** with a left thumb. Similarly, the angle between the lower surface **608** and the right edge surface **604** may be defined to enable the user to cradle the right side of the reader **100** with a right hand. This angle may also enable the user to manipulate the control surfaces **116A** and **116B** and the right-hand portion of the keyboard **104** with a right thumb.

The non-symmetrical shape of the housing **102** is further characterized by various non-right angles at three of the four

corners of the device as viewed in FIG. 4. The upper right hand corner of the housing **102** may incorporate an angle α , which defines the relationship between the vertical right edge of the housing **102** and an angled portion that meets the horizontal top edge of the housing **102**. In one possible implementation, this angle α may be approximately 10° , but may range from approximately 5° to approximately 15° .

Turning to the lower right hand corner of the housing **102**, an angle ϕ_R defines the relationship between the vertical right edge of the housing and an angled portion that meets the horizontal bottom edge of the housing. In one possible implementation, this angle ϕ_R may be approximately 4° , with a suitable range from approximately 1° to approximately 10° . At the lower left hand corner of the housing **102**, an angle ϕ_L defines the relationship between the vertical left edge of the housing and an angled portion that meets the horizontal bottom edge of the housing. In one possible implementation, this angle ϕ_L may be approximately 5° , but may range from approximately 1° to approximately 10° .

Further, as shown in FIG. 5, the non-symmetrical housing **102** of the eBook reader device **100** has other sloping surfaces that contribute to the overall aesthetics and feel of the device. An angle β defines the relationship between the flat bottom surface of the housing **102** and the sloped upper portion of the housing. In one possible implementation, this angle β may be approximately 8° , but may range from approximately 5° to approximately 15° . An angle μ defines the relationship between the flat top surface of the housing **102** and the sloped lower portion of the housing. In one possible implementation, this angle μ may be approximately 5° , but may range from approximately 1° to approximately 15° .

FIGS. 7-9 show the back, right side, and bottom views of the eBook reader device **100**, respectively. The housing **102** includes a panel **702**, which may be removed for access to the internal components of the device, including the battery. The housing also has speaker grills **704** to emit sound from a speaker.

FIG. 10 illustrates the wedge-shaped configuration of the eBook reader device **100**. FIG. 10 may be viewed as representing a cross-sectional profile of the device, presented in a more schematic form, as compared to FIGS. 3-9. The wedge-shaped configuration is defined by angles **1002**, **1004**, **1006**, and **1008**.

Angle **1002** describes the relationship of left edge surface **602** and the slanted lower surface **608**. In one example implementation, the angle **1002** is an obtuse angle in a range of 116° to 136° , with one suitable example being approximately 126° . The angular relationship between the left edge surface **602** and the horizontal upper surface **606** is referenced at **1004**. In one possible implementation, the angle **1004** is an acute angle with a range of 40° to 60° , with one example being approximately 50° .

Angle **1006** describes the relationship of upper surface **606** and the right edge surface **604**. In one example implementation, the angle **1006** is an obtuse angle in a range of 132° to 152° , with one suitable example being approximately 142° . The angular relationship between the right edge surface **604** and the lower surface **608** is referenced at **1008**. In one possible implementation, the angle **1008** is an acute angle with a range of 32° to 52° , with one example being approximately 42° .

With the illustrated wedge shape, the device **100** approximates the feel of a paperback book whose pages have been folded back around the spine (i.e., along the thicker left side **302**) after being read. The user can easily grasp the device **100** with his or her left hand along the thicker left side **302** in a manner similar to holding a paperback book with one hand.

11

As a result of folding back the read pages, the remaining unread pages become feathered in a slanted manner, as modeled by right edge surface **604** and angles **1006** and **1008**.

It is noted that the angles **1002-1008** shown in FIG. **10** are illustrative only, and may be varied without departing from the scope and spirit of the description herein. In general, any angular measurements for these four angles that result in the overall device having a non-parallelogram, wedge-shaped configuration are possible. This wedge-shaped configuration may result from the lengths of the portions **602-608** relative to one another, and/or the relationships of the various angles **1002-1008** relative to one another. It is understood that these factors may be varied in any number of ways to result in the wedge-shaped configuration shown in FIG. **10**.

The configuration shown in FIG. **10** may be suitable for right-handed users. However, it is understood that the above descriptions may also be applied to implementing a device **100** and related housing **102** adapted for left-handed users. An example of such is shown in FIG. **11**, which is now described.

FIG. **11** presents a cross-section of the device **100** in block form, and provides illustrative angular values for the four angles that make up the block representation of the device **100**. The device **100** as shown in FIG. **11** may be suitable for left-handed users. For convenience of illustration and description only, the device **100** shown in FIG. **11** may be visualized as a reverse configuration of the device **100** as shown in FIG. **10**, where a left side **1102** is thinner than a right side **1104** and lower surface **608** slants upward from right to left. New angles **1106-1112** approximate mirror the angles shown in FIG. **10**, where angle **1106** is similar in range to angle **1008**, angle **1108** is similar to angle **1006**, angle **1110** is similar to **1004**, and angle **1112** is similar to angle **1002**.

FIG. **12** illustrates a rear view of another possible implementation of the device **100**. In this implementation, the device **100** may include attachment points **1202** and **1204** for attaching an accessory to the device **100**. The device **100** may also include an alignment point **1206**. An illustrative accessory is shown in block form at **1208**. Similar to the device **100**, the accessory **1208** includes attachment points **1210** and **1212** and a complementary alignment point **1214** that coordinate with the attachment points **1202**, **1204** and alignment point **1206** of the device **100**. Illustrative, but non-limiting, examples of accessories that may be used with the device **100** may include a reading lamp, a foldable protective cover for the front of the device, a docking station or other general-purpose interface, a data exchange interface, an external speaker, a text-to-speech converter, an interfaces for a remote control unit, an external network port, an interface for radio-frequency (RF) communication, a power supply for providing power to the device, an accessory receiving power from the device, or the like.

The accessories may fit onto the back of the device, or may fit along the side of the device. Also, some accessories may include portions that fold over the front of the device, or that articulate so as to focus on particular portions of the device.

In one possible implementation, the attachment points **1202** and **1204** include metallic members that are located inside the housing **102**, out of view. The accessory **1208** is equipped with magnetic attachment points **1210** and **1212** that respectively engage the metallic attachment points **1202** and **1204** on the device **100**. The magnetic strength of the attachment points **1210** and **1212** provided by a given accessory may be varied depending on the weight and size of the accessory. Alternatively, the attachment points **1202** and **1204** on the device **100** may be made of a magnetic material. The attachment points **1210** and **1212** on the accessory **1208** may

12

then include metallic members that engage these magnetic attachment points **1202** and **1204**.

In other implementations, the attachment points may employ other complementary connecting materials. As one example, the attachment points **1202** and **1204** on the device **100** and the attachment points **1210** and **1212** on the accessory may employ Velcro®-brand materials.

The alignment point **1206** on the device may serve as a guide to help align the mating surfaces of the accessory **1208** and the device. The alignment point **1214** on the accessory **1208** is complementary to the alignment point **1206** on the device **100**. In one example implementation, the alignment point **1206** on the device **100** may be a raised or embossed portion, relative to the device housing **102**, that fits into a depressed or recessed area defined by the alignment point **1214**. In another implementation, the alignment point **1206** on the device **100** may define a depressed or recessed area, and the alignment point **1214** on the accessory **1208** may provide an embossed or raised portion.

In any event, illustrative but non-limiting dimensions for the alignment points **1206** (on the device) and/or **1214** (on the accessory) may be 42.5 mm in length, 3.4 mm in width, and 1.2 mm in relief or depth, depending on whether the alignment point is implemented as a raised portion or as a recessed portion. The alignment points **1206** and **1214** may include a full round detail on both ends. However, it is noted that other dimensions and end details may be implemented without departing from the scope and spirit of the description herein. For example, different dimensions may be implemented depending on the shape, weight, purpose, or use of the accessory **1208**. Additionally, the shapes of the alignment points **1206** and **1214** are illustrative only, and other shapes may be implemented as well.

The alignment points **1206** and **1214** may provide for both horizontal and vertical alignment of the accessory **1208** and the device **100**. In some implementations, this alignment may be purely mechanical. However, in other implementations, the device **100** may provide data and/or power to the accessory **1208**, or vice versa. In these latter implementations, the device **100** and the accessory **1208** may provide respective mating connectors for performing such data and/or power transfer. The alignment points **1206** and **1214** may help to align these respective connectors to facilitate secure engagement between the connectors.

In any event, the attachment points **1202-1204**, the alignment point **1206**, and any signal or power connectors on the device **100** may define a standard interface for any accessories **1208** that may be attachable to the device. By complying with this standard interface, those who provide the accessories **1208** may be confident that the accessories are compatible with the device **100**.

It is understood that the layout and shapes of the elements shown in FIG. **12** are illustrative rather than limiting. It is expressly noted that implementations of the device **100** may include different layouts and shapes of, for example, the alignment points **1206** and/or **1214** without departing from the spirit and scope of the description herein.

Keyboard Arrangement

FIG. **13** illustrates the keyboard **104** of the eBook reader device **100** in more detail. The keyboard **104** may be operative to control aspects of displaying content presented by the device **100**, or to enter text, symbols, or alphanumeric characters that may represent, for example, commands, search strings, or the like. The keyboard **104** may be implemented as an alphanumeric keyboard, with individual keys for letters and numbers, supplemental keys for a space bar, <Ctrl> keys, <Alt> keys, numeric keys, function keys, and the like. In one

13

implementation, the alphanumeric keyboard is arranged in a QWERTY layout, although other arrangements of the A-Z keys may be used. In general, the keyboard 104 provides a respective key for each letter. Numbers may be provided on separate keys, or combined with certain of the letter keys.

As shown in FIG. 13, the keyboard 104 is composed of a first group of keys 104A and a second group of keys 104B, which are arranged so that a user may readily and easily reach all of them using his or her thumbs when holding the bottom of the eBook reader device 100. The key groups 104A and 104B are separated by the region or area 110, which has a width W that is greater than a width of an individual QWERTY key in the keyboard.

For convenience of discussion and illustration only, certain descriptions are provided below with reference to either group 104A or 104B. However, it is understood that descriptions provided for either group applies equally to the other group.

As shown with the group 104A, the keys are arranged in horizontal rows, represented generally in FIG. 13 by the horizontal dashed lines 1302A, 1302B, and 1302C (collectively, horizontal rows 1302). In some implementations, the horizontal rows 1302 may be non-uniformly spaced from one another. For example, as shown in FIG. 13, the rows 1302B and 1302C are slightly closer than are rows 1302B and 1302A, although it is understood that other implementations may vary the spacing between the rows 1302.

The keys may also be arranged in vertical columns, represented generally in FIG. 13 by the vertical dashed lines 1304A, 1304B, 1304C, 1304D, and 1304E (collectively, vertical columns 1304). In some implementations, the vertical columns 1304 may be uniformly spaced from one another. For example, as shown in FIG. 13, the columns 1304A-1304E have approximately the same spacing from one another, although it is understood that other implementations may vary the spacing between the columns 1304.

Only in the interest of legibility, the columns 1304 are shown only within the group of keys 104A. However, the group of keys 104B may also be arranged in columns similarly to the group 104A, although the columns 1304 are not shown explicitly in the group 104B to avoid complicating the drawing. It is understood that all descriptions of the group 104A apply equally to the group 104B, and vice versa.

As readily appreciated from FIG. 13, the horizontal rows 1302 and the vertical columns 1304 form a grid, with individual ones of the keys being located at the intersections within this grid. More specifically, the center points of the keys may be located at these intersections. Additionally, the keys that are aligned in a given vertical column 1304 may be rotated by or oriented at a given angle, relative to the horizontal rows intersected by that given column. This given angle may vary for each of the vertical columns 1304, such that keys in each column are angled by the same amount relative to the horizontal rows 1302.

The printed circuit board structure underlying the keyboard 104 may provide electrical contact points at the approximately grid intersections shown in FIG. 13. The contact points may lie approximately under the center points of the individual keys. However, the key caps themselves may be oriented or rotated as described herein. Further, the orientation or rotation of the key caps may not affect the structure of the underlying printed circuit board.

In the illustrative but non-limiting implementation shown in FIG. 13, the three keys in the vertical column 1304A are angled at approximately 45°, as referenced at 1306A. The angle 1306A may fall within a range of approximately 40° to 50°. The three keys in the vertical column 1304B are angled

14

at approximately 40°, as referenced at 1306B. The angle 1306B may fall within a range of approximately 35° to 45°. The three keys in the vertical column 1304C are angled at approximately 30°, as referenced at 1306C. The angle 1306C may fall within a range of approximately 25° to 35°. The three keys in the vertical column 1304D are angled at approximately 25°, as referenced at 1306D. The angle 1306D may fall within a range of approximately 20° to 30°. The three keys in the vertical column 1304E are angled at approximately 15°, as referenced at 1306E. The angle 1306E may fall within a range of approximately 10° to 20°.

As shown in FIG. 13, the angles of the keys relative to the horizontal rows 1302 decrease when viewing the columns of keys from the center of the device 100 toward the edges of the device. For example, in the group of keys 104A, the angles of keys relative to horizontal rows 1302 decrease from column 1304A to column 1304B and so on. Similarly, in the group of keys 104B, the angles of keys relative to the horizontal rows decrease when moving along the key columns from left to right.

As described above, unlike conventional keyboards, individual QWERTY keys are rotated within the rows 1302 such that keys in adjacent rows lie along generally arcuate paths. This key orientation facilitates ergonomic operation by a user's thumbs when the user is grasping the two lower corners of the device. More particularly, the QWERTY keys may be arranged generally in several arcuate configurations within each group of keys 104A and 104B. For convenience, but not limitation, the QWERTY keys in group 104B are arranged along arcs 1308A, 1308B, 1308C, 1308D, and 1308E (collectively, arcs 1308). For clarity of illustration, the arcs 1308 are shown only with the group of keys 104B. However, it is understood that the keys 104A may also be arranged in a plurality of arcuate configurations. It is further understood that the lines representing the horizontal rows 1302, the vertical columns 1304, and the arcs 1308 would not physically appear on the device 100, but instead may be considered guide lines that facilitate illustration and discussion. Thus, these lines are dashed in FIG. 13.

The arcs 1308 are arranged relative to a right-side point of reference PR_R , which is associated with the group of keys 104B. It is understood that the position of this illustrative point of reference PR_R is somewhat arbitrary, and is not depicted with any degree of mathematical precision. Instead, the point of reference PR_R provides an example reference point that may serve as a center point for the arcs.

Various ones of the arcs may be set at respective distances from the point of reference PR_R , such that the arcs are associated with different radii relative to the point of reference PR_R . Thus, keys placed along these various arcs are placed at radii having different lengths. The keys 104B shown in FIG. 13 may be placed at distances reachable by a user's right thumb when the device is in use. Put differently, the keys 104B may be placed within the sweep of the user's right thumb, when the user is grasping the lower right side of the device 100 such that the user's thumb pivots approximately about the point of reference PR_R . In this context, the arcs 1308 may be viewed as paths along which the user's right thumb may travel to select various individual keys.

Individual keys are rotated or otherwise oriented to accommodate thumb actuation throughout the arcuate sweeps of the thumbs, for example along the arcs 1308. At least some of the keys may be oriented relative to the point of reference PR_R , or may be oriented relative to another point of reference. The various keys themselves may be associated with respective center points (e.g., the center point C), such that these center points lie generally on one of the arcs 1308. Keys along a

15

given arc are aligned in different columns. Recall from the above discussion that keys in different columns are oriented at different angles relative to the horizontal rows **1302**. Thus, keys arranged along a given arc are oriented at different angles relative to the horizontal rows **1302**. In other instances, the keys along a given arc are oriented somewhat non-uniformly along the arc. Keys **1310A** and **1310B** along the arc **1308A** provide an example of such non-uniform orientations.

The left-side group of keys **104A** may be visualized as a mirror image of the right-side group of keys **104B**. Thus, the QWERTY keys in the left-hand group **104A** are arranged along corresponding arcs similar to the arcs **1308** described with the right-hand group **104B**. To avoid complicating the illustration of the keys **104A** in FIG. **13**, the arcs are omitted.

A point of reference PR_L is associated with the keys **104A**. When the user is grasping the lower left side of the device **100**, the user's left thumb pivots approximately about the point of reference PR_L to reach the keys **104A**. Thus, the user's left thumb may travel along arcuate paths similar to the arcs **1308** to select various individual keys. The two points of reference PR_R and PR_L may be located, respectively, in the lower left and lower right corners of the device **100** when the device is oriented for viewing by the user. Thus, the two points of reference PR_R and PR_L are spaced from one another on the device **100**.

FIG. **14** illustrates another configuration **1400** for the keyboard **104**, with example labels affixed to various keys. It is noted that the arcuate and the row-column configurations of the keys are generally similar to that shown in FIG. **13**. However, to promote clarity, the lines representing the arcs, rows, and columns are omitted from FIG. **14** since they were shown in FIG. **13**. The description related to the arcs, rows, and columns from FIG. **13** applies equally to FIG. **14**. Illustrative functions that may be performed by various keys are now described.

A user may press and hold an ALT key **1402** to invoke an alternative function associated with any of the other keys of the keyboard **104**. For example, to conserve space and to maximize the number of different functions that may be performed using the keyboard **104**, one or more given keys in the keyboard **104** may be associated with multiple functions. Such keys may include respective labels designating these multiple functions. A first function may be accessed by pressing the given key alone. At least one more function may be accessed by pressing and holding the ALT key **1402**, and then pressing the given key.

The user may press a "space" or "space-bar" key **1404** to enter a space into a text string being edited by a user. The "@" key **1406**, the "/" key **1408**, and the ":" key **1410** may enable the user to quickly enter e-mail addresses, HTTP addresses, or any other text strings that include these three characters.

The user may press a "SYM" key **1412** to bring up a menu of symbols, from which the user may select for entry into a text string. The menu of symbols may be populated with a plurality of symbols that are most likely to be selected by the user.

The user may press a "SEARCH" key **1414** to bring up a search menu, from which the user may initiate keyword searches. The user may search content stored locally on the device **100**, or may search content stored externally to the device **100**.

The user may press a key **1416** to change a font size in which the content is presented in the content display **106**. The key **1416** may be implemented so that as the user repeatedly presses it, the font size may, for example, become progressively larger or smaller. The key **1416** may also be implemented so that when a maximum or minimum size is reached,

16

the font size may revert, respectively, to a minimum size or a maximum size to allow the user to repeat this process until a desired size is reached.

Dual Display

FIG. **15** illustrates the dual display system employed by the eBook reader device. The dual display system may include the content display **106** and the narrow display **108**. As described above, the content display **106** is adapted for displaying visible representations of textual or graphic content, such as contents of an electronic book in digital form. For convenience only, the content display **106** is shown in a generally rectangular configuration in FIG. **15**. However, it is understood that the content display **106** may be implemented in any shape, and may have any ratio of height to width. Also, for stylistic or design purposes, the content display **106** may be curved or otherwise non-linearly shaped.

The device **100** may also include a second display **108** in addition to the content display **106**. As shown in FIG. **15**, the narrow display **108** has a height approximately equal to the height of the content display **106**, but a substantially smaller width in comparison to the content display **106**. As a result, the narrow display **108** has a smaller overall surface area as compared to the content display **106**. In other implementations, the narrow display **108** may be wider or have different ratios of height and width. Also, in the illustrated implementation, the narrow display **108** is positioned alongside of and parallel to, the content display **106**. It is noted, however, that the narrow display **108** may be positioned in other relationships to the content display **106**. For example, the narrow display **108** may be above, below, or on either side of the content display **106**. Further, although the narrow display **108** is shown in a generally rectangular configuration, it may be implemented in other non-rectangular shapes. In some instances, the narrow display **108** may conform to the shape of the content display **106** as a whole, or to a part thereof.

The narrow display **108** may be located proximate the content display **106** to enable the user to input commands that are to be performed on the content shown in the content display **106**. In the illustrated implementation, the narrow display **108** is aligned along one side of the content display **106** so that the user may visually relate content that is displayed in the content display **106** with corresponding areas of the narrow display **108**. To facilitate this visual correlation, some implementations of the narrow display **108** may be divided into segments **1502**, with each segment containing a graphic element that corresponds to a portion of the content display **106**. FIG. **13** shows five representative segments, referenced at **1502A**, **1502B**, **1502C**, **1502D**, and **1502E** (collectively, segments **1502**). These respective segments **1502** may be responsive to user input within the segment to perform an action relating to the content that is shown in the corresponding portion of the content display **106**.

FIG. **15** illustrates the content display **106** and the control display **112** as separate elements only for convenience of illustration and description, and not to limit possible implementations of the description herein. In some instances, the content display **106** and the control display **112** may be implemented as separate elements, as shown in FIG. **15**. In other instances, the content display **106** and the control display **112** may be implemented as a single display, with logically separate control systems for driving the content display **106** and the control display **112**.

In one implementation, the several segments **1502** within the narrow display **108** may be delineated from one another using lines or bars. These boundary lines may serve to make clearer the association between the segments and the corresponding portions of the content display **106**. Assuming that

17

the narrow display **108** is implemented with a technology that uses individually-addressable pixels, these lines or bars may be implemented by altering selected pixels to define these lines or bars.

To facilitate the foregoing functions of the content display **106** and the narrow display **108**, certain implementations of the content display **106** may use display technology that provides a relatively slow rate of refresh relative to the narrow display **108**. Assuming that the content display **106** would present relatively static text and graphics, this slower rate of refresh may be an acceptable trade-off against reduced power consumption. For example, if the device is an electronic book whose “pages” are turned or scrolled fairly infrequently once they are displayed, a slow rate of refresh may be acceptable. An example of suitable technology for the content display **106** is the electronic paper display technology described above.

In contrast, the narrow display **108** may be implemented with technology having a faster rate of refresh, relative to the content display **106**. Even if the per-unit-area power consumption rate of the narrow display **108** is higher than that of the content display **106**, the smaller surface area of the narrow display **108** may negate this issue somewhat, so that the overall power consumption of the device **100** is nevertheless acceptable. The narrow display **108** may be implemented using, for example, LCD technology. The narrow display **108** may further be responsive to user input, whereas the content display **106** may not be responsive to user input. For instance, the narrow display **108** may be implemented with touch-sensitive technology that is responsive to stylus input and/or touch input, and may be sized as appropriate, given the mode by which the user is expected to interact with the narrow display **108**.

The content display **106** may present essentially any type of textual or graphical content. As one example, in FIG. **15**, the content display **106** is shown as presenting multiple titles to the user. These titles might represent, for example, titles of content that are stored on the device **100** and that are available for selection and viewing by the user, or perhaps content that is available from an online library that is accessible wirelessly or via some other connection. For example only, and not limitation, FIG. **13** shows five sample portions or elements, referenced at **1504A**, **1504B**, **1504C**, **1504D**, and **1504E** (collectively, elements **1504**).

Assuming that the content display **106** contains the five content elements **1504** as shown in FIG. **15**, the narrow display **108** may display five corresponding segments **1502**. However, it is understood that the number of segments or graphic elements **1502** in narrow display **108** may vary according to the number of elements **1504** presented in the content display **106**. Also, the size of individual segments **1502** in the narrow display **108** may depend on how the elements **1504** are represented in the content display **106**. As shown in FIG. **15**, the graphic elements **1502** may be arranged in a column alongside the content display **106**.

As one example operation, assume the user wishes to select a title associated with one of the elements **1504A-1504E** in the content display **106**. The user may refer to the narrow display **108** and identify the segment **1502** that corresponds to the desired title. Having done so, the user may then tap or otherwise interact (e.g., via a stylus, pointed instrument, finger, etc.) with the corresponding segment **1502** in the narrow display **108**.

As another example operation, the user may operate the tool **112** to select certain segments **1502** in the narrow display **108**. In one implementation, the selection tool **112** is configured to control movement of a cursor **1506** vertically within the narrow display **108** alongside the group of elements **1504**.

18

The selection tool **112** may be implemented as a rotary device, a dial, a toggle switch, or the like. As the user manipulates the tool **112**, the cursor **1506** is maneuvered until it rests alongside the desired one of the segments **1502** that corresponds to the desired one of the title elements **1504**.

For convenience only, FIG. **15** illustrates titles in the content display **106**. However, it is noted that the content display **106** may display other subject matter without departing from the spirit and scope of the description herein. For example, the content display **106** may present menu items, lines of text, elements related to a graphical user interface (GUI), or the like.

It is noted that the space allocated to the various elements **1504** may vary, and that all elements **1504** need not be uniform in size. Some elements **1504** may be larger or smaller than others, depending on the amount of content being presented in the elements **1504**. It is also noted that the segments **1502** may vary in size according to the size of the elements **1504**. Finally, the size of the cursor **1506** may match the size of the segment **1502** with which it is aligned. As the cursor is moved vertically within the narrow control display **108**, the size of the cursor **1506** may vary, depending on the size of the segment that the cursor is alongside.

While title selection is described in the above example, the foregoing description may be applied to enable the user to execute any number of requested operations. For example, having selected a given title for reading, the user may navigate through the selection by selecting, touching, or otherwise interacting with the segments **1502**. In general, the segments **1502** may enable the user to cause some action to be performed on subject matter presented in the content display **106**.

Page Turner

FIG. **16** shows one implementation of the page turner in more detail. In this implementation, the page turner is embodied as the page turning mechanism **114** located in the lower right side of the reader device **100**, adjacent to the keyboard **104**. In this location, the user can hold the eBook reader in the left hand, and turn pages of the electronic book using his or her right hand, similar to how the user would leaf through a physical paperback book. The mechanism **114** is sized to accommodate the user's thumb **1602** (or other finger). The user turns pages of the electronic book (or other electronic content) by swiping his or her thumb **1602** across the page turning mechanism **114**. A left-to-right motion directs the reader device **100** to turn the pages forward in the electronic book, and a right-to-left motion directs the device **100** to turn the pages backward in the electronic book. It is noted that the mechanism may be positioned elsewhere on the eBook reader device **100**, and FIG. **16** illustrates just one example location.

Further, recall from above that a “page” as described herein may be understood as a virtual frame of the content, or a visual display window presenting the content to the user. The pages presented on the device **100** and turned using the page turning mechanism **114** may not correspond directly to the identical hard pages in the associated physical book. Depending on display capabilities, font size, and other such parameters, any given “page” displayed on the device **100** may contain more or less text/graphics than the corresponding hard page. Thus, the page turning mechanism **114** turns pages in the sense of changing from one display frame to another.

The page turning mechanism **114** includes at least one sensor and at least one tactile member. In the FIG. **16** illustration, the mechanism **114** has a single tactile member **1604** positioned between two sensors **1606** and **1608**. The tactile member **1604** provides tactile feedback as the user swipes his

19

or her thumb **1602** over the page turning mechanism **114**. In this example, the tactile member **1604** is a ridge that projects outward from the surface, as illustrated in the cross-section taken along lines A-A (and labeled **16 A-A**). The tactile member **1604** simulates the ruffle sensation experienced when a user flips through paper pages of a physical book. The ridge member **1604** may be implemented using hard materials, such as plastic, or may alternatively be configured as a flexible member using, for example, an elastomeric material. In addition, the ridge member **1604** may also have a surface construction or structure that provides additional tactile sensation when a user passes his or her thumb over the mechanism **114**. In this manner, the surface may include small ridges, uneven contour, or other configurations to provide a tactile feedback. Furthermore, the surfaces of sensors **1606** and **1608** may also possess a non-smooth surface that provides a tactile sensation. More generally, the ridge members and sensors have surfaces that when stroked by a user's finger, impart a sensation of leafing through paper pages in a physical book.

The sensors **1606** and **1608** detect speed and direction of the user's thumb or finger. When passing over the mechanism **114** in a left-to-right swipe, the left-side sensor **1606** detects the thumb first, followed by the right-side sensor **1608**. Conversely, when passing over the mechanism **114** in a right-to-left swipe, the right-side sensor **1608** detects the thumb first, followed by the left-side sensor **1606**. In one implementation, the sensors are capacitance sensors that detect presence of gesture proximity via changes in capacitance. The capacitance sensors generate signals in response to changes in capacitance. Other types of sensors that may be used include resistive sensors, force or strain gauge sensors, and optical sensors. When implemented using certain alternative sensors, such as resistive and force sensors, the page turning mechanism **114** may also be configured to detect pressure in addition to direction and speed.

The signals generated by the sensors' detection of thumb movement are passed to a page turn detector **216**. From these signals, the detector **216** determines direction of the thumb movement as a function of the order in which the sensor signals are received. For left-to-right movement, a signal from the left-side sensor **1606** will be received before a signal from the right-side sensor **1608**, and vice versa for a right-to-left movement. Additionally, the page turn detector **216** can approximate the speed of the thumb movement as a function of a time difference between receipt of signals from the two sensors **1606** and **1608**, with a shorter time delay indicating a faster swipe and a longer time delay indicating a slower swipe. Thus, the page turning mechanism **114** is able to detect gestures of flipping forward or backward through the book, and can advance one page at a time for a slower swipe (i.e., if the thumb speed is below a threshold) or multiple pages at a time (i.e., if the thumb speed is above a threshold). The page turn detector **216** may be implemented as an electronics component, or as software executing on the device **100**. Depending upon implementations, a pressure parameter may also be provided to the page turn detector **216**.

FIGS. **17-19** illustrate exemplary alternative implementations of the page turning mechanism. In FIG. **17**, the mechanism **1700** has three tactile members **1702** positioned atop a single sensor **1704**. In this implementation, the sensor **1704** is a resistive or force pad that detects pressure from contact or touch, and hence can detect location of the user's thumb on either side of the ridges **1702**. It is noted that in other implementations, the tactile members **1702** may be positioned between two sensors, similar to that shown in FIG. **16**.

20

The three tactile members are raised from the surface of the device, as illustrated by the cross-section taken through line B-B (and labeled **17 B-B**). Page turning mechanism **1700** is similar to mechanism **114** in FIG. **16**, in that the tactile feedback is provided by raised ridges. However, unlike mechanism **114**, the page turning mechanism **1700** of FIG. **17** has multiple tactile members (three in this example) to further simulate the edges of paper.

FIG. **18** shows another implementation of a page turning mechanism **1800**, which has a single tactile member **1802** juxtaposed between two sensors. However, unlike the ridge member of FIG. **16**, the tactile member **1802** in FIG. **18** is formed as a channel or indentation into the surface of the device. As shown in the cross section taken through line C-C (and labeled **18 C-C**), the tactile member **1802** has a semi-circular cavity formed in the device surface.

FIG. **19** shows yet another implementation of a page turning mechanism **1900**. In this implementation, the mechanism **1900** employs a combination of raised and indented tactile members. More specifically, the mechanism **1900** includes a ridge member **1902** surrounded by indentation members **1904** and **1906**. This tactile assembly is then positioned between the two sensors. A cross-sectional view taken through lines D-D (and labeled **19 D-D**) shows the alternating concave-raised-concave pattern.

The implementations illustrated in FIGS. **16-19** are merely examples. Any combination of at least one tactile member and at least one sensor is possible.

FIG. **20** shows another implementation of an elongated page turning mechanism **2002** that is sized substantially larger than a human thumb. In this example, the page turning mechanism **2002** extends approximately the height of the display **106**, although other intermediate sizes are possible. The elongated page turning mechanism **2002** includes a long ridge member positioned between two sensors, similar to that shown in FIG. **16**. It is noted, however, that other arrangements of one or more tactile members and one or more sensors may be used, such as those shown in FIGS. **17-19**. Further, the elongated page turning mechanism **2002** replaces the control surfaces **116A** and **116B** in this arrangement.

The page turning mechanism **2002** may further be configured to detect the absolute position of the user's thumb or finger (or other pointing element) along the height of the sensor. In this manner, the page turning mechanism may be used to perform other functions than turning pages of content, such as highlighting a portion of text, selecting a highlighted section, or selecting a menu option when a menu is depicted on the display. Thus, although the page turning mechanisms **114** and **2002** are described as being configured to turn pages, they may be configured to perform other functions in response to detecting gestures.

FIG. **21** shows another implementation in which the page turning mechanism **114** is positioned at a location near the upper right hand corner. In this position, the mechanism **114** resembles a bookmark referencing a page or location in the eBook to which the reader can return. It is noted that the page turning mechanism may be located in any number of areas, and those shown in FIGS. **16-21** are merely representative.

CONCLUSION

Although the subject matter has been described in language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the subject matter defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific

21

features or acts described. Rather, the specific features and acts are disclosed as exemplary forms of implementing the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A handheld electronic book device comprising:
 - an electronic paper display screen for presenting a portion of an electronic book; and
 - an asymmetrical housing adapted to contain the electronic paper display screen, the asymmetrical housing including first, second, third, and fourth substantially planar surfaces, and wherein:
 - the electronic paper display screen is disposed at the first surface;
 - a control to return to a previous portion of the electronic book is disposed at the first surface;
 - a control to advance to a next portion of the electronic book is disposed at the second surface;
 - the first and the second surfaces form a first angle therebetween;
 - the second surface and the third surface form a second angle therebetween;
 - the third surface and the fourth surface form a third angle therebetween; and
 - the fourth surface and the first surface form a fourth angle therebetween;
 - wherein the first, second, third, and fourth surfaces are non-parallel to one another and define a closed cross-sectional profile of the device, and the first, second, third, and fourth angles therebetween are arranged so that a distance between the first and third surfaces is non-uniform along the closed cross sectional profile of the device making one side of the housing thicker than an opposing side and locating the center of gravity closer to the one side; and
 - wherein the first angle is obtuse, wherein the second angle is acute, wherein the third angle is obtuse, and wherein the fourth angle is acute.
2. The handheld electronic book device of claim 1, wherein the electronic paper display screen is for presenting textual content.
3. The handheld electronic book device of claim 1, wherein the electronic paper display screen is for presenting graphic content.
4. A handheld electronic device comprising
 - an asymmetrical housing having a closed cross-sectional profile and that includes first, second, third, and fourth substantially planar surfaces, wherein:
 - the first and the second surfaces form a first angle therebetween;
 - the second surface and the third surface form a second angle therebetween;
 - the third surface and the fourth surface form a third angle therebetween;
 - the fourth surface and the first surface form a fourth angle therebetween; and
 - wherein the first, second, third, and fourth surfaces are non-parallel to one another and define the closed cross-sectional profile of the device, and the first, second, third, and fourth angles therebetween are arranged so that the closed cross-sectional profile of the device is generally wedge-shaped, the first angle being obtuse, the second angle being acute, the third angle being obtuse, and the fourth angle being acute.
5. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the first angle is approximately 126 degrees.

22

6. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the first angle falls within a range of approximately 115 degrees to approximately 150 degrees.

7. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the second angle is approximately 50 degrees.

8. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the second angle falls within a range of approximately 30 degrees to approximately 60 degrees.

9. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the third angle is approximately 142 degrees.

10. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the third angle falls within a range of approximately 115 degrees to approximately 150 degrees.

11. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the fourth angle is approximately 42 degrees.

12. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein the fourth angle falls within a range of approximately 30 degrees to approximately 60 degrees.

13. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein a distance separating the first surface and the third surface varies along the closed cross-sectional profile.

14. The handheld electronic device of claim 4, wherein a thickness defined between the first surface and the third surface varies to define the wedge shape of the closed cross-sectional profile of the device.

15. A handheld electronic device comprising:

- a content display adapted for displaying visible representations of content;

- a plurality of keys responsive to user input to alter the visible representations;

- an asymmetrical housing adapted to contain the display screen and the keys, wherein the housing has a generally wedge-shaped configuration in which one side of the housing is comparatively thicker than an opposing side of the housing, the asymmetrical housing including first, second, third, and fourth substantially planar surfaces that define a closed cross-sectional profile of the device, wherein each of the first, second, third, and fourth substantially planar surfaces is non-parallel to the others of the first, second, third, and fourth substantially planar surfaces; and

- a second display disposed in the asymmetrical housing and positioned alongside the content display,

- wherein the second display includes a plurality of graphic elements that correspond to surfaces of the content display, and wherein the second display is responsive to user input to one of the graphic elements to perform at least one action on the content shown in the portion of the content display that corresponds to the one graphic element.

16. The device of claim 15, wherein the content display is for presenting textual content.

17. The device of claim 15, wherein the content display is for presenting graphic content.

18. The device of claim 15, wherein a first plurality of the keys is arranged in an arcuate configuration relative to a first point of reference on the device, and wherein a second plurality of the keys is arranged in an arcuate configuration relative to a second point of reference on the device, wherein the second point of reference is spaced from the first point of reference.

19. The device of claim 15, wherein:

- the first and the second surfaces form a first angle therebetween;

- the second surface and the third surface form a second angle therebetween;

23

the third surface and the fourth surface form a third angle
therebetween; and
the fourth surface and the first surface form a fourth angle
therebetween; and
wherein the first, second, third, and fourth surfaces and the 5
first, second, third, and fourth angles therebetween are
arranged so that the closed cross-sectional profile of the
device is generally wedge-shaped.
20. A handheld electronic book device comprising:
an electronic paper display screen for presenting a portion 10
of an electronic book; and
an asymmetrical housing adapted to contain the electronic
paper display screen, the asymmetrical housing includ-
ing first, second, third, and fourth substantially planar 15
surfaces, the first surface defining a front of the device
that includes the electronic paper display screen, the
second surface defining a first side of the device, the

24

third surface defining a back of the device, and the fourth
surface defining a second side of the device, and
wherein:
the first surface and the second surface form a first angle
therebetween, the first angle being obtuse;
the second surface and the third surface form a second
angle therebetween, the second angle being acute;
the third surface and the fourth surface form a third angle
therebetween, the third angle being obtuse; and
the fourth surface and the first surface form a fourth
angle therebetween, the fourth angle being acute; and
the first angle, the second angle, the third angle, and the
fourth angle define a closed profile having a center of
gravity closer to the second side of the asymmetrical
housing unit than to the first side of the asymmetrical
housing unit.

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